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NOTE ON A NEW $\frac{1}{5}$ OBJECTIVE.—In the NATURALIST for August appears the announcement that “Mr. Tolles has recently completed a $\frac{1}{5}$ objective perfectly satisfactory to himself.” Now the fact is Mr. T. never constructed an objective of any power “perfectly satisfactory to himself,” and I really think it necessary to put in a plea in abatement to this effect.—ROBT. B. TOLLES.

WALES.—Wm. Wales, who has been abroad this summer, has returned to Fort Lee, N. J., and resumed work in the construction of his well-known and much-used objectives.

NOTES.

At the second meeting of the Agassiz Natural History Club, held at the Anderson School of Natural History, July 30th, Mr. Jordan gave an account of two algæ common on our shores, known as *Chordaria flagelliformis* and *Dictyosiphon feniculæcus*, which have been considered as distinct plants and referred to different orders. Areschoug suggested, some time ago, that the latter was but an abnormal state of the former, but this view has not been accepted by other algologists. Mr. Jordan showed a drawing of a specimen of *Chordaria* found in Penikese harbor, two of whose branches were, to all appearances, *Dictyosiphon*, both to the naked eye and under the microscope. Unless the *Dictyosiphon* were parasitic, which on close examination seems impossible, or unless it be not identical with the plant described under that name in Europe he thought we must conclude that the two alleged species are but different forms of *Chordaria flagelliformis*.

Mr. Ingersoll mentioned some of the changes in the general forms of terns, in their growth. In the bird just ready to hatch the head is about as bulky as the whole body, and the distance from the commissure to the crown is nearly as far as to the occiput; the bill is short and thick, the eyes well forward, large and closed. The shoulders are tolerably narrow and the body widens and thickens posteriorly. The legs are long in proportion, lack color and rigidity, and seem fat and useless. The body is covered with flexible, hair-like tubes instead of feathers, which, however, indicate in their areas of growth the pterylography of the species. At birth changes begin which culminate in maturity. The bill becomes long, attenuated and sharp at the tip, until it measures from commissure to tip twice the distance from commissure to

occiput. The bill is now bright red with more or less black about the tip. The black tip is apparent in the embryo, but the red does not appear till the bird is ready to fly, and then but faintly. Meanwhile the top of the head flattens till the angle between it and the culmen is almost lost; so that the longest diameter of the head is the horizontal. The neck is still long and slender, but in the body the main bulk is anterior between the shoulders, and not in the hinder part of the body where the yolk is absorbed, as in young birds. The breast bone gradually increases in strength and the keel assumes its large proportions by the time of maturity.

Mr. J. Tingley asked if the colors could be preserved in starfishes. Prof. Agassiz replied that certain shades of color were more evanescent than others, but in the end all would disappear. Specimens preserved in glycerine or alcohol would preserve their colors for a short time. It was not known to what the colors were due; and this was true of all marine animals. Color, in some fishes examined, was found to be due to different oils accumulated in distinct cells, and different tints arose from the grouping of certain cells. The Professor said further that nothing could be more beautiful under the microscope than these pigment cells, and it was easy to obtain them—only take a little piece of colored skin. He had forty folio colored plates of one species from the embryo, where the pigment cells were few, up to older specimens where they were crowded one behind the other, and he had seen them in very many conditions, yet he had not come to the end of the story. The different tints were, he supposed, owing to different oxidation; at any rate the colors seemed to be different conditions of an identical substance.

At the recent meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science held in Portland, Maine, from Wednesday, August 20th to Tuesday, the 26th, one hundred and fifty-seven papers were entered on the general list. Abstracts were received of all but nine and were referred to the sectional committees who allowed most of them to be read; a number that were read, however, were not approved by the committees for publication. This careful discrimination is yearly becoming more necessary in order to keep up the character of the papers accepted for publication and to keep the limits of the volume within the means of the Asso-

ciation, though it would be a subject for great regret if funds were not at hand for the printing of every paper that advanced science.

The very opportune donation of one thousand dollars by Mrs. Elizabeth Thompson, the first patron of the Association, will allow the commencement of a new series of publications of papers embodying original research, thus enabling the committee to show especial honor to such papers. Seventy-seven of the papers presented were referred to Section B (natural history) and many of them were of first rank in scientific importance.

The general character of the meeting was decidedly scientific, and the discussions, though sometimes sharp, were carried on with a general good feeling and no personalities arose to mar the good nature of the meeting. The rooms of the City Building, where all the meetings were held, were all that could be desired. The Local Secretary and a few other members of the Local Committee were indefatigable in their efforts to make the meeting pleasant and successful so far as the local arrangements were concerned. It must be confessed, however, that the social element and the sympathy of the citizens generally with the objects of the Association were far less than at any previous meeting which we have attended. The lunch given by the ladies of Portland and the clam bake at Old Orchard Beach broke the ice a little, but that hearty entering of the citizens into the objects of the Association, which has characterized former meetings, was wanting. The excursions, by rail and steamer, after the adjournment, were much enjoyed by those able to remain and take part in them. About two hundred old members were present and one hundred and ten new members were elected. Prof. Lovering in his closing remarks as president made an eloquent speech and declared the twenty-second meeting closed at 11 o'clock A. M. on Tuesday, August 26th.

Among the important business transacted during the session was the report of a special committee on a revision of the Constitution, looking to a better carrying out of the objects of the Association. This report will come up for action at the next meeting which will be held at Hartford, Connecticut, on the second Wednesday of August, 1874.

The general officers of the next meeting are Dr. J. L. LeConte, President; Prof. C. S. Lyman, Vice President; Dr. A. C. Hamlin, General Secretary; Mr. F. W. Putnam, Permanent Secretary.